The

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

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Notes of the Month.

Last month saw the conclusion of a long and honourable career, whose beginning fell in the early years of the nineteenth century. But Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace was in no respect content to be a cipher in this century. Preserving his marvellous power of thought and of expression almost up to the end, he signalised his ninetieth year by the publication of works, which showed no falling-off in clearness of outlook and vividness of interest in what was passing around him. If his earliest works betrayed profound and painstaking knowledge of nature, suggesting affinities with Charles Darwin, whose great discovery of evolution he had independently divined, his later works indicated no less clearly regard for, and insight into, the problems of human nature and society. This mental activity at an advanced age calls to mind a similar characteristic in the case of Dr. Martineau, who, living even longer, published in later life some of his most remarkable works. The careers of both men would seem a striking confirmation of the view held and illustrated by Mr. Gladstone—that a life of strenuous thought makes for longevity. Be that as it may, the passing hence of Alfred Russell Wallace means the severing of a link with the distant past which his great qualities of head and heart had helped to make memorable.

* *

Another link with the great Victorian period of thought and activity was broken by the death of a faithful member of our English Unitarianism, Miss Gaskell. Reminding those privileged to know her of her distinguished mother, the novelist, she perpetuated her memory in traits of character and in acts of philanthropic service. No good cause appealed in vain to the cultured and hospitable Gaskell home in Plymouth Grove, Manchester. How many distinguished men and women had found a welcome and a congenial atmosphere in the same abode ! Thos. Carlyle, Charlotte Bronte, Catherine and Susanna Winkworth—these are but a few of the great names that are linked with the names of Mrs. Gaskell and the Rev. William Gaskell. Al-

though, as a result of Miss Gaskell's death, many deserving institutions will feel the benefit of her large-hearted charity, many persons will miss her kindly presence and her sympathetic interest. It was altogether fitting that at her funeral service in Cross Street Chapel there met together representatives of every religious community, conscious of a common loss. Never reticent concerning her own Unitarian attachments, she endeared herself to all by a charity that transcended all divisions, and made sympathy and service co-extensive with human need.

* *

In the year which will soon dawn, the new Sustentation Fund will come into operation, and, as a consequence, the ministers will reap the benefit of the generous giving of their lay friends and well-wishers. While unfortunately the amount contributed has not yet reached £10,000, we trust that the thought of what has been already accomplished will be an incentive to those who have not yet given. In the natural course of events, the Fund will benefit in the future by the bequests and legacies of our well-to-do members, yet it should ever be borne in mind that the status of our ministry, which such a fund helps to raise, is of concern to all our people, and this can be furthered by the practical support of all. As the first payments will not be made before July, 1914, there is still time for further contributions to increase the amount available for disbursement, while all earlier promises, if fulfilled as soon as possible, will greatly tend to the same end.

* *

We do not forget that ere the present month runs its course Christmas, with all its sacred associations, will come. May it bring with it for young and for old, as well as for those who regard themselves as properly belonging to neither, all seasonable joy and happiness. May it evoke the spirit which was in him whom we commemorate, and may that spirit comprehend in its beneficent intent and activity not only those near and dear to us, but also all we can bless and cheer. "A Happy Xmas to all our Readers" is our sincere wish.

* *

An excellent little book of Irish Poetry, by the Misses Duffin, entitled the "Secret Hill," has just been published. It is evident, after a perusal of these delightful verses, that these ladies have in great measure inherited the genius of their grandfather. The book is neatly bound in a tasteful cover designed by the authors' sister, Miss Emma Duffin, who is well known as a miniature painter. This little work, so eminently suitable for a Christmas gift, is published at the moderate price of 1s. net, which brings it within the reach of everyone. We noticed that there is a large stock at the Depository, and Mr. Eustace Gordon tells us the demand for it is very great. Whilst drawing the attention of our readers to this little book which is on sale at the Depository, 35 Rosemary Street, we would also beg to draw their attention generally to the Depository. It is one of the important agencies of our Church, and, under a courteous and very efficient management, is doing valuable work. It has achieved much success, and has thoroughly deserved all it has achieved. At present it is stocked with Christmas requisites of manifold variety, and is prepared for the largest turn-over of business experienced during its existence. We respectfully bespeak for it the patronage of all our readers. Those in the City will no doubt make their calls there and their purchases; and those from the country will find no better place in Belfast. We wish it all success, because for very many reasons it is worth it.

GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY.

By Rev. G. L. Phelps.

Although Isaiah pictured the Servant of God as a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," and although this has been applied to the founder of Christianity, yet the birth of Christ was heralded, not as a sad event, life's judgment day, but as the bright dawn of a

better and happier time. "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

This, it seems to me, is the meaning of the Christian revelation, the message of him who came that we might have life, and have it abundantly. Joy is natural to man, and shall be ours when we live naturally, when we live, that is to say, in harmony with the highest and the best.

What a wonderful and beautiful world is ours: how crowded with blessings which may all be ours. Each morning the rising sun lifts the veil of night, and, lo, a sight which, did we gaze upon it for the first time, would fill our souls with rapture—a very paradise of God. All the grandeur and glory of earth and sky and sea to charm and to cheer us. Day by day we have at hand, if we would but grasp them, innumerable sources of joy. There is the ever-changing beauty of the outward world; there are the ties of kinship knitting us together in bonds of mutual love and service. How good it is to love and be beloved, to know that we are not alone, to know that some are dear to us and some look up to us; there are the ties of friendship and the joy of hearts and minds in sweet accord; there is the company of great minds through good books; there is the rich inheritance of knowledge and the joy of advancing in wisdom; there is our own creative energy by which we may have the joy of lordship over nature. What time would suffice to tell of the divine gifts freely offered to all and in no way depending on worldly wealth? Verily

> This world's no blot for us,
> Nor blank; it means intensely, and means good:
> To find its meaning is my meat and drink.

Christmas is a season of joy, because it is the anniversary of the birth of Christ. At a time, when it seemed that men had lost the true way of life and were seeking for joy in paths which only lead to disappointment and despair, there came one who was the way, the truth, the life. By his absolute trust in God even unto death, by his oneness with all that is beautiful and true and good, by his benign and winsome personality, his serenity and his meekness, he triumphed over the world, and so taught that the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace.

The value of the Christian revelation to us and the true meaning of the joy of Christmas is not that Christ achieved a miracle by his birth and by his death, purchased a future heaven of bliss for us, but that by his life he pointed the way to the attainment of blessedness here and now.

> Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born.
> If he's not born in thee, thy soul is all forlorn;
> The cross of Golgotha thou lookest to in vain,
> Unless within thyself it be set up again.

Life is not all joy; there are doubts and fears, pains and sorrows, failures and disappointments, but if we would only honestly ask ourselves how much of this is due to selfishness and greed, hate and envy, to man's inhumanity to man, to our falling short of what we know to be the best and the highest, we should be convinced that a little faith would remove whole mountains of misery.

We have our dreams of the regeneration of mankind, our far-reaching schemes for the betterment of the masses; the dreams and the schemes are ours, because we have been roused by the glad tidings of Christianity, but our methods will be wiser and our work more successful when within our hearts there has been born the Christ-spirit, tender, trustful, true. When we seek only the right, when we love instead of hate and distrust our enemies, when we govern instead of be governed by our passions, when we give free play to our instincts of brotherhood and *live* instead of quarrel about our religion, the leven of love and righteousness shall leven the lump, and great movements and great nations having within them men of good-will shall achieve peace. Once more shall the morning stars sing together, for we, being then verily sons of God, shall be shouting for joy.

That we on earth with undiscording voice
May rightly answer that melodious noise;
As once we did, till disproportion'd sin
Jarr'd against nature's chime, and with harsh din
Broke the fair music that all creatures made
To their great Lord, whose love their motion sway'd
In perfect diapason, whilst they stood
In first obedience, and their state of good.
O may we soon again renew that song
And keep in tune with heaven, till God ere long
To his celestial concert us unite.
To live with him, and sing in endless morn of light.

THE PRESENCE.

By Rev. John Barron.

On entering the house of a respected member of our Church recently, I was pleased to see in the hall a beautiful picture of the interior of the Cathedral of Monreale, which is celebrated for its wonderful mosaics, which look like exquisitely soft paintings. High over the altar is a gigantic picture of Christ extending to the ceiling, with his hand raised in blessing. A writer upon Sicily refers to this picture, and also to a similar one in the Cappella Reale at Palermo, as "following exactly the same tradition, quite unlike the ordinary tradition." The conventional picture of Christ is generally traced back to a portrait engraven on an emerald "on the ring of Tiberius." But the portraits here referred to are not of a meek and mild Jesus, but of a man of great force of character, more like the type to be the founder of a religion, infinite tenderness combined with great power. The original Monks of Mount Athos, to whom these mosaics are ascribed, came to Sicily from the East, and this fact makes their traditional representation of special interest. A recent visitor to the Cathedral of Monreale describes the impression made: "Through that wondrous atmosphere stole upon the uplifted eyes a vision of beauty, soft, compelling, gradually clarifying into the majestic figure of the Christ, shining down from the eastern apse, the eyes compassionate and yet commanding, the mouth strong but with a pathetic droop, the right hand upraised in blessing, the left holding an open book. Thus verily looked the Christ when he walked as man among men; this is not the crucified, tortured, dying victim, but the World-Teacher." At St. Peter's Church, Plymouth, just within the entrance, stands a beautiful marble statue of Christ, with the hands somewhat extended in the attitude of welcoming the worshippers as they enter the church, and under the statue are the words, "Come unto Me." Undeniably there is always a "real presence" in the sanctuary. God the Father is there. The indwelling presence in the hearts of the worshippers is there, and the belief in the presence of the Master of the Christian Church, wherever two or three are met together in his name, is still strong throughout the whole of the Christian Church.

Religion has passed through a fiery ordeal, and in many quarters, no doubt, is still doing so. But there are numbers who had lost their faith, who have recovered it again in more rational form, never again to lose it by any challenge of materialism, and one item of their faith, which they are glad to be able to retain in a way satisfying to heart and mind, is in the continued presence of the Master, who is Head and Chief Shepherd of His Church.

Upon doctrinal matters our Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church is neutral. Tolerance is the key-word of its constitution. It preserves the liberty of its members to believe as well as to disbelieve. Its policy is that of inclusion, and not exclusion. The minds of worshippers are left free, unfettered by dogma. The truth that is won by hard and patient thought is of far higher value than that which, however valuable it may be, is imposed by outer compulsion. In an atmosphere of love and mutual trust realisation of deeper meanings can be obtained than in the dust and friction of controversy.

He who said the truth shall make you free will not withhold his presence and his blessing from a community seeking to worship in sincerity, even though the Presence may not be recognised nor its necessity understood.

How can he be present everywhere with his Church? But, on a higher plane of being, "the mind is where it thinks itself." What is space on the surface of our world with wireless telegraphy? There are those who tell us that every human brain is a receiver and transmitter of telepathic currents; "thought-transference" is now almost a part of official science. What then of the mind that is higher than the brain, what of the spirit beyond the mind? "Spirit with spirit can meet." Is there no need to organise the inner life of the Church as well as its outer form, and is not that the function of the Master of the Church?

Scientists tell us of the permanent atom in the body which remains amid all the changes of atoms which is continually going on, determining and continuing the temperament of the body.

What then if the Master Jesus himself be the permanent atom, the central unit and nucleus of the Christian Church?

Religion depends upon experience for its hold on human lives more than on carefully worked-out arguments. There is intuition as well as reason wherewith to anchor the soul. The presence of Christ with his Church is to some in our midst a most inspiring truth. One of our most highly esteemed and venerated members said once to me: "Life would indeed be desolate for me if I did not believe that Christ was still present with his Church."

LORD HEADLEY ON CHRISTIANITY AND MOHAMMEDANISM.

By Rev. J. A. Kelly.

Mr. Allanson-Winn, who in January last, on the death of his cousin, became fifth Baron Headley, has recently been contrasting Christians with Mohammedans, to the disadvantage of the former. The public Press during the last few days has drawn attention to what it has called his (Lord Headley's) "Conversion" to Islamism, but apparently there has been no *real* conversion, as he is reported to have said: "Although I have accepted the Mohammedan faith, I am still a Christian in so far as believing in Christ and following the teachings of Christ." Whilst dissenting from some of Lord Headley's assertions regarding the super-excellence of the Mohammedan Creed, still one is bound to thoroughly agree with him when he condemns the intolerance and hypocrisy he has seen among "Christians," which, he states, have had much to do with his position in regard to Mohammedanism. He says: "The intolerance of one sect of Christians toward other sects holding some different form of the same faith, of which I witnessed many instances, disgusted me. You never hear Mohammedans speak concerning those of other religions as you hear Christians talk of one another. They may feel very sorry that other persons do not hold the Mohammedan faith, but they don't condemn them to everlasting damnation because of a differing belief." Lord Headley, as a member of the Church of England, appears to have been unfortunate in his experience in regard to sincerity in religion among Christians. In his condemnation of Sunday religion, he says: "The earnestness and sincerity of Mohammedans are greater than anything I have seen on the part of Christians. The ordinary Christian man puts on religion on Sunday as a respectable habit because he thinks it right, and possibly because his father and grandfather before him always honoured Sunday with the same observance. When Sunday is over his religion is discarded for the rest of the week. With the Mohammedan, on the contrary, there is no distinction between Sunday and any other day. He is always thinking of what he can do in God's service."

Apparently Lord Headley has seen Christians at their *worst* and Mohammedans at their *best*, for we hold that the Christianity of Christ is the best religion of which the world has had experience, and that it condemns the unreality and make-believe referred to by Lord Headley, just as much as it extols the virtues and graces which

he approves. However, Lord Headley's words are a reminder to all who belong to the Christian Church that it is their duty so to live that the teaching and example of Christ are illustrated and followed in their lives. For their own good and that of others they should take to heart those words of the Master —" Let your light so shine before men, that they may see you good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

THE ANNUAL TEMPERANCE MEETING.

In connection with the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland a Conference was held in the Central Hall, Rosemary Street, on 12th November. Rev. G. L. Phelps read an instructive paper on " A Temperance Legislation Programme," which gave rise to an interesting discussion. The Moderator (Rev. M. S. Dunbar, M.A.) presided, and there was an encouraging attendance.

The Chairman said the meeting had been called by the Temperance Committee in connection with their Church. They had to view the question of temperance from the standpoint of the medical man, that of the Christian minister, that of the temperance worker, and that of the drinker himself, for he had his reasons and arguments for indulging in his vice. A whole literature had grown up around these questions which was almost too much for any one mind to overtake. That afternoon their attention was to be directed to what the Legislature had done to help on this great reformation in the habits of the people—a reformation which would put an end to poverty, lunacy, disease, crime, and misery.

Rev. G. L. Phelps, in the course of his paper, referred to the recent meeting of the Belfast and Ulster Vintners' Association, and quoted a portion of their annual report. There was in it, he said, the parrot cry about making people sober by Act of Parliament. One way, however, to make people sober was to reduce the consumption of intoxicating drinks, and when they had an association of people who were financially interested in increasing the consumption congratulating themselves on the lack of legislation they might be sure they at any rate believed legislation could affect a reduction. Then they had their acknowledgment that in the case of the Budget there followed a reduction. There were some half-hearted temperance workers who used the same old cry to excuse themselves for not doing anything beyond band of hope work. The great misfortune in that matter was that temperance people had allowed their efforts at legislation to become a party question. To say they could not make people sober by Act of Parliament was almost as absurd a half truth as to say they could not make people honest by Act of Parliament. They could not make people sober, but they could give them less opportunity to get drunk. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, as a result of an awakening of the public conscience, the Privy Council issued a proclamation, and the Home Secretary wrote to the lords-lieutenant, urging them to incite the justices to take active steps against depravity, dissipation, and disorderly practices generally. The result was what Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb described as " the most remarkable episode in the whole history of public-house licensing in England, the sudden and almost universal adoption by county and borough benches of a policy of restriction and regulation." More than 7,000 spirit licences and a large number of ale-house licences were dropped. In Norway, in Canada, in the United States, everywhere in fact, the reduction of the number of houses for the sale of intoxicating drinks had resulted in increased sobriety of the people. Whoever would face the facts was obliged to admit that Acts of Parliament had a very considerable effect on the increase or decrease of drunkenness. Proceeding, Mr. Phelps pointed out that for the past few years the largest political party in Ireland had supported whatever temperance legislation the Government had brought in, but good care had been taken to exclude Ireland. In the case of the

Budget of 1910 the increased spirit duty was tolerated as the price to be paid for something more dear to the hearts of Nationalists. They were compelled by expediency, but much against the grain, to vote, not in favour of the duty, but to keep the Government in power. As for the other party, he simply asked when had any of them voted for a temperance measure. In speaking on the point of how the interests of temperance might be served quite irrespective of party politics, Mr. Phelps said the members of the Protestant Churches should insist, as they could well insist, without moving a hair's breadth on the Home Rule question, on being represented by men who would support temperance reform. In conclusion, Mr. Phelps dealt with the points on which it would be wise to concentrate attention. He would favour the drafting of a Liquor Trade Reform Bill, which would provide a reduction of the hours during which intoxicating drinks should be sold ; the abolition of grocers' licences ; and the prevention of persons who were financially interested in the liquor trade, directly or indirectly, professionally or privately, from acting as magistrates whenever a question affecting a licence was being considered. There should be a Local Option Bill, His programme was not going to solve the temperance problem entirely, but he believed on such lines as he had indicated they must first proceed.

Rev. T. Dunkerley opened the discussion. He pointed out that the writer had broken new ground. Experience had taught them that the moderate use of alcohol created a craving which led to excess, and legislation left out the influences in this direction. Temperance workers should not let this grand philanthropic movement be used as a tool by any political party. It was too sacred for that purpose. Local option was a fair and right means of legislation, but Mr. Phelps had not told them what was to be done with the publicans. It was always a mistake for any good movement to take means that were unjust and harmful towards any section of their fellow-beings. He was disposed to think that the publicans were justified in calling it confiscation, and confiscation was unjust, whether it was done by a tyrant or whether it was the work of a political party. When the temperance movement would remove the public suspicion in this direction it would lessen the opposition to it. He asked, by way of addendum to the writer's paper, for some consideration for the publican, and said that he would not let a question of compensation interfere with the great temperance movement.

Rev. J. A. Kelly said the defeat of the present legislation would be good for the country and good for temperance. If there was one party bound up in the liquor traffic, it was the Nationalist party.

Rev. A. O. Ashworth was against compensation, and as a publican's licence was only for twelve months he could have no claim.

Rev. E. H. Pickering said party politics had become a curse, and at the present time they could not get proper temperance legislation because of party politics. The question of Home Rule had been dealt with in Parliament on party lines, and was therefore not properly dealt with. All along the line the principle in politics was "dish the other party." No really big question could be settled at the present time by legislation because of party politics.

Mr. Henry Magowan was of opinion that it would be just as easy for "a camel to go through the eye of a needle" as for a Christian to become a drunkard. He believed that if the living of a publican was taken away he would be compensated—a Christian community would see to it.

On the motion of Rev. E. Thompson, seconded by Rev. J. Worthington, a hearty vote of thanks was passed to the Rev. G. L. Phelps for his interesting and instructive paper.

PUBLIC MEETING.

In the evening a public meeting was held in the same Hall, but, owing to the inclement weather, there was only a sparse attendance. The Moderator

again presided, and speeches on various aspects of the drink question were delivered by Rev. Felix Holt, B.A., Ballymoney; Mr. E. A. Atkinson, of the Irish Temperance League; and the Rev. J. Glynne Davis, Banbridge. At the conclusion, a vote of thanks was accorded to the Chairman and speakers and the ladies who had presided at the tea-tables at the afternoon meeting.

ARMAGH AND BANGOR PRESBYTERIES.

A *Pro-re-nata* meeting of the *Remonstrant Synod of Ulster* was held in the *First Presbyterian Church, Belfast, on Wednesday, November 12th*, at 11-15 a.m., for the purpose of considering the proposed Amalgamation of the Armagh with the Bangor Presbytery.

The Moderator (Rev. D. J. Williams) presided, and there was a representative attendance of members from each Presbytery in connection with Synod.

After devotional exercises by the Moderator, the roll was called by the Clerk (Rev. G. J. Slipper), who also read the copy of notice of meeting.

The action of Moderator and Clerk in convening the meeting having been sustained by resolution of Synod, the Rev. J. A. Kelly (Clerk of Bangor Presbytery) submitted a resolution from that Presbytery as follows :—

> "That the Bangor Presbytery report that the Armagh Presbytery having agreed to merge itself in that of Bangor, we hereby ask the Remonstrant Synod to sanction this action."
>
> J. A. Kelly, Clerk.

It was moved by Rev. A. Turner, seconded by Rev. W. Weatherall, and passed :—

> "That the Remonstrant Synod sanction the merging of the Armagh Presbytery with Bangor Presbytery."

Permission having been granted by Synod to the Rev. A. Turner to bring forward a motion, he proposed, Rev. Thomas Dunkerley seconded, and it was passed in solemn silence, all members standing :—

> "That the Synod wishes to give its sincerest condolences to Mrs. Matts and Miss Matts on the death of their husband and father, a very old member of this Synod, whose work was always faithfully done by him in accordance with his strength."

The meeting was then closed by the Moderator pronouncing the Benediction.

Immediately following this meeting a *pro-re-nata* meeting of the General Synod of the Church was held to ratify the proposed amalgamation.

The Moderator (Rev. M. S. Dunbar, M.A.) presided, and constituted the meeting with devotional exercises.

The Clerk (Rev. George J. Slipper) having called the Roll and read notice of meeting, which was approved,

Rev. Thomas Dunkerley addressed the meeting upon the matter of amalgamation, and the Clerk submitted the resolutions from Bangor Presbytery to the Remonstrant Synod, also that passed by Synod, whereupon the Rev. H. J. Rossington moved, Rev. A. Turner seconded, and it was unanimously resolved :—

> "That Synod give sanction to the amalgamation of the Armagh Presbytery with the Bangor Presbytery."

Permission having been granted to the Rev. A. Turner to bring forward a motion, he again proposed, Rev. J. H. Bibby seconded, and it was passed as before, the resolution conveying the condolences of the members to Mrs. and Miss Matts on the death of the Rev. David Matts.

The Clerk was granted permission to submit a report from Sub-Committee on Missionary effort and other business, after which the meeting was closed with the Benediction pronounced by the Moderator.

Obituary.

REV. DAVID MATTS.

Many friends on both sides of the Irish Channel will receive with very real regret the news of the passing away of Rev. David Matts, a veteran of some fourscore years, which occurred a few days ago at his residence, West Bromwich.

Entering at the Unitarian Home Missionary Board in 1863, David Matts became minister in 1866 at Woodchurch Road, Oxton, near Birkenhead, where

the late Francis Morton, Esq., maintained a school-church, in a corrugated iron building, a mode of structure for which his firm was famous. In 1868 Mr. Matts removed to take charge of the congregation of Ballymoney, in the Presbytery of Templepatrick, Co. Antrim, and here for some four and forty years, till near the close of 1912, he laboured with quiet and unassuming diligence, bearing up latterly against the disadvantages of waning health.

Such a career presents no striking features, but a life so dutiful and true was bound to secure, as it did, the affectionate regard of those with whom Mr. Matts was associated, whether of his own way of thinking or not. At the time of his retirement the local Press paid him, what is far more than compliment, the warm tribute of the Irish heart. "By his modesty," it was said, "his kindliness of heart, his unfailing courtesy of manner, his ready sympathy wherever sorrow invaded a home, he gained and retained the respect of all creeds. His blameless and upright life manifested many of the graces of the Christian spirit; and he has gone away, leaving pleasant memories behind him, regretted by a loyal congregation which received his demission of the charge with feelings of sorrow. Unlike the majority of Englishmen, who hardly understand the Irish people, Mr. Matts seemed from the first a true-born Irishman. His home was a model one—harmonious with an atmosphere of peaceful tranquillity. His wife was the kindliest and most tactful of women." His sons died young; his daughter accompanied her parents to their retirement. To them we offer our most tender sympathies. Precious to them in large measure, as to us in such measure as we may, is the memory of a long life of unobtrusive goodness.

MR. THOMAS HENDERSON.

The death took place at his residence in Bangor, on 17th November, of Mr. Thomas Henderson, chartered accountant and estate agent, of High Street, Belfast. Deceased, who was in his seventieth year, had in the course of years built up an extensive business, and was entrusted with the property affairs of a very large clientele, by whom he was highly esteemed. From the nature of his profession he was widely known in the city, and enjoyed a high reputation for professional ability and commercial probity. He was a member of the Unitarian body, and in politics was a Unionist. Mr. Henderson was long and closely associated with All Souls' Church, Elmwood Avenue, and served the congregation there during the last five years of his life in the position of honorary treasurer, and was always ready to support his church in any claims that might be made. But his material support to his church was not his only characteristic. He was a Unitarian by conviction, and his zeal for his religious principles was so warm that he rarely, if ever, lost an opportunity of spreading those principles abroad. In addition to his treasurership of All Souls' congregation, he was for many years honorary treasurer of our Orphan Society, in whose affairs he took a deep and keen interest. His genial presence will be greatly missed by the governors of the Orphan Society, and they will remember also that the accounts of the Society, audited by the Local Government Board, were always presented by him in strictest order and accuracy. Indeed, he was much esteemed by all who came in contact with him. Mr. Henderson took no active part in public matters, though he had a wide circle of private friends both in Belfast and Bangor, and by these, as well as by his numerous clients, his death will be sincerely regretted. He leaves behind him a daughter, to whom we tender our sympathy in her great loss.

MR. WILLIAM GIBSON.

We regret to record the death of Mr. William Gibson, head of the firm of Messrs. Gibson & Co., jewellers, of Belfast, which occurred at Brighton on November 1st. He was in his seventy-third year, and was a native of Dromore. He had been associated with Belfast district for many years, and his death will be sincerely regretted by a very wide circle of acquaintances. Until the close of life, the progress and welfare

of Belfast and Ulster were dear to him, and not infrequently he entertained his friends with a store of interesting reminiscences. His apprenticeship was served with his brother-in-law, the late Mr. James Crozier, who carried on a successful business as a watchmaker. In 1880 he proceeded to London, and there established the Goldsmiths' and Silversmiths' Company, which has its headquarters in Regent Street, and which is known everywhere as a manufacturing company. Since that time he has resided in London, with the exception of the winter months, which of late he spent in his charming villa at Cannes. He paid continual visits to Belfast, and took an active interest in the affairs of the firm locally, where Gibson's Corner, the site of his showrooms, between Castle Street and Donegall Place, will long perpetuate his name and fame in popular parlance. As representing his firm, he attended exhibitions in Paris, Philadelphia, and Chicago, and at the Paris Exhibition he obtained from Marshal M'Mahon the Cross of the Legion of Honour as well as a royal blue tea service.

One was not long in Mr. Gibson's presence before discovering what, in the main, was the secret of his wonderful business success—a success which seemed to follow him wherever he went, both in this country and in England. Emerson somewhere gives expression to a truth which we have all verified at some time or other in our own experience, that, though work may not always spell success, an indispensable element in all achievement is work. It is here we hit upon the secret very largely of the late Mr. Gibson's success. A man of uncommon business ability, he was, above all, a worker—who loved work himself, and expected it from others. He was impatient with—had a wholesome contempt for the shirker—the man who seeks to pass through the world without making his just contribution of effort, either of hand or brain, while to the man who showed the least possible desire for self-improvement he extended the hand of friendship and of help. He was a life-long member of the Dromore Church, and in his will provision is made for it to the extent of £500. Though a Unitarian, he readily acknowledged the good work that other churches were doing, and not infrequently helped them out of his ample means. On more than one occasion he gave expression to the desire that the different churches should unite together on the basis of a common religious feeling and aspiration, and agree to differ on points of theological interpretation. He thought that the ministers of the different churches in Dromore should try to bring their congregations together for a united service occasionally in the Town Hall—a consummation, surely, devoutly to be wished, but, it is feared, a remotely distant one. Broad in his sympathies, inflexibly upright in his business relations, generous and kindly to his friends, his death is mourned by a large circle of acquaintance both in Ireland and in England.

LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

By Rev. E. H. Pickering, B.A.

Stories from the Old Testament.

I. Joshua: the great choice. Read Joshua 24, 1-5, 13-25. *Memory verse,* Joshua 24, 15.

Introduction. Moses died just before the Israelites reached the Promised Land, and Joshua, the son of Nun, succeeded him as leader. He led the people to many brilliant victories, and now, in his old age, they are about to take possession of the Promised Land. Draw a vivid word picture of the grand old chief, assembling the victorious host before him, and, just before he died, putting before them the significant points. These are—

1. *God's great mercy and reliability.* Show the children the wonderful way in which they are protected by parents, teachers, and friends. No great good man has ever yet found God wanting. Always his actions have brought good fruit. *e.g.,* Jesus Christ, whose great saving work took its real beginning from his death.

2. *A man must choose, not drift. e.g.*, story of boy and the big, ripe pear. He ought to have *decided* that it was not his, and not have touched it just *to see* if it would fall. To do well in any sphere we must choose a definite course of life. God's goodness demands choice and confirms it. We must each face the question : " What shall I be ? " Take the hymn, " Once to every man and nation comes a moment to decide."

3. *Choice must be of the right, even though difficult.* A true hero is he who bravely speaks the truth and does the right without flinching, *e.g.*, the Roman sentry at Pompeii. N.B.—How honestly Joshua put before the people the full obligations of their choice. It is hard to work for God, but if we trust it is most joyous, *e.g.*, St. Paul (Phil. 3, 12-14) ; also Browning's words : " Then welcome each rebuff that turns earth's smoothness rough."

II. The Judges : Israel's backsliding. (1) *Deborah.* Read Judges 4, 1-16. *Memory verse,* Judges 4, 4.

Introduction. The Israelites did not keep to their choice, but mixed the worship of Jehovah with that of the heathen gods. Hence, time after time, they fell, owing to national disunion, into the power of surrounding peoples. But each time a judge arose to lead them to victory by purifying their religion. N.B.—Israel at this time (before 1,000 B.C.) had by no means conquered the whole of the land, but simply held a few strong positions here and there. The business of the judge was to fuse them into a mighty force by means of a national spirit. In more recent times the little Swiss people threw off the great power of Austria because they dearly loved their country.

Points.—1. *The writer believed so firmly in God* that he held that God was actually responsible for the disaster. This is most true, for a people which keeps true to God is always strong, if not in possession, at least in spirit. Note—Remorse for bad behaviour makes us feel that punishment is deserved.

2. *A woman as judge or ruler. e.g.*, Queens Elizabeth and Victoria. In ancient times especially we find women in positions of great dignity and influence. Among the Jews, Miriam (Exodus 15, 20, ff.) and Huldah (2 Kings 22, 14 ff.) ; also among the Romans and Greeks, and especially our Teutonic forefathers. Illustrate by means of mothers, nurses, etc., and mention such great Christian women as Elizabeth Fry, Dorothea Dix, Florence Nightingale. Note how Barak trusted in Deborah.

Note.—The next two lessons are special Christmas lessons. They can be taken in any order, but perhaps the first lesson on the Christmas message is most appropriate to the Sunday before Christmas, which is Peace Sunday.

1. *The Christmas Message.* Read Luke 2, 1-20. *Memory verse,* Luke 2, 14.

Introduction. Luke is, above all the evangelists, a writer for the lowly. He it is who has preserved this beautiful story of the revelation of all heaven's glories to the humble shepherds, and has surrounded the birth of Jesus with the lowly things of earth. *e.g.*, the shepherds who worship him, and the manger in which he was born.

Points.—1. *No room in the inn.* The inn was so full of busy, worldly people that no room could be found for the lowly Christ. This is just what happens in the world to-day. Where there is selfishness, cruelty, greediness, and impurity no room can be found for the gentle, beautiful spirit of Christ. But in any and every humble corner where love is, there Christ is, and there God is.

2. *The Christian message — peace.* Peace is the most beautiful thing in the world, and it springs from that still more beautiful thing, love. Because God in His love had sent Jesus to the world, the angel's message was peace. In Genesis 13, 1-12 we read how the wise and generous spirit Abraham brought peace in place of strife. Peace comes when we think of others, and desire them to have a share of the good things.

2. *Christmas, the festival of childhood.* Read Matthew 2, 1-12. *Me*

mory text, Isaiah 9, 6, "For unto us a child is born."

Introduction. At Christmas children have every right to be proud of themselves, for it is Jesus the little child, not Jesus the great grown-up man, but the helpless little one, to whom all the world at this season does reverence. This is quite as it should be. The little child is the beginning of things. The little child Jesus was the beginning of Christianity. It is the little child who fills the home with love, and so prepares the way for a more Christian world.

Points.—1. *The wise men.* These great, wise men travelled hundreds of miles to do reverence to a little child. This reminds us of the behaviour of a certain schoolmaster who always bowed reverently before his scholars. "All these children are possibly great men." It is for every child to make that possibility a reality. The wise may bring their learning. Children can always bring loving hearts—the finest things in the world.

2. *Herod's fear of a little child.* The simplicity and goodness of a little child is the most powerful rebuke which can be offered to cruel and wicked men. Every time a little child is born into the world wickedness quakes with fear, for every little child is a possible Christ, and therefore a foe to all wickedness.

Reports.

Unity Guild.—The second meeting of the session was held on Wednesday, November 19th, in Mountpottinger Unitarian Church School-room, when the evening was devoted to a debate on the question of "Is the Cinema Conducive to the Public Good?" The affirmative was taken by the Rev. F. Woolley, and the negative by Mr. E. R. Jackson. Both speakers gained good points for their own side, the opener making a strong point of what he considered to be the educative value of the Cinema, whilst his opponent dealt with the question in so far as it affected the great question of public health and morals. An interesting discussion followed, which was taken part in by the President (Mr. A. M'I. Cleland), Revs. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D.; A. O. Ashworth, J. Worthington, B.A., and Mr. George J. Hill. The President, in his remarks, admitted that he was somewhat inclined to "sit on the fence" so far as this question was concerned, and the other speakers showed a like tendency, so it was decided to take no vote on the matter.

Ballyhemlin.—The winter session of the Guild was opened on Monday evening, November 10, at the Orange Hall, Ballyhalbert, by a very pleasant and successful social. Tea was provided, and a large number of friends were assembled.

Belfast: First Church.—The first Organ and Vocal Recital of the winter was given after evening service on November 2nd, and, despite the torrential rain which descended at the time for service, there was a good attendance. This testified, not only to the attractiveness of the music provided by the Organist (Mr. Wilfred Layton, F.R.C.O., A.R.C.M.) and its two soloists (Mrs. Moore and Mrs. Wilfred Layton), but also was a tribute to the interest awakened by Mr. Layton's conduct of the musical part of the services since the beginning of October. Judging by that, as well as by the excellent Recital given last month, our music promises to prove increasingly attractive. This appeared also at the opening meeting of the Band of Hope on November 5th, when a good audience greatly enjoyed the programme of miscellaneous musical items contributed by the Organist and professional members of the Church Choir. That came after tea, and the election of officers and Committee for 1913–14. The President (Rev. H. J. Rossington) briefly alluded to the work of the previous session, and outlined the programme for this. The second meeting would be held on December 3rd, when he would give a lecture, illustrated by limelight views. To that not only members of the Band of Hope, but also their friends would be welcome.

All Souls' Church, Belfast.—The Blue Bird Bazaar, held on 21st and 22nd November, in Rosemary Hall, for the

purpose of extinguishing the Church debt, was a great success. The decorations of the Hall were, as far as possible, in accordance with the scenes in Maeterlinck's famous play, "The Blue Bird." Each stall represented a scene from the play, and the children were, for the most part, dressed like the characters. In addition, there were numerous attractions. In the large hall a continuous entertainment was provided by Mr. O'Mealey, the Irish piper, a ladies' string orchestra (conducted by Mr. Drew Birch, the Church Organist), the auto-piano, and the crane-o-phone; whilst in the crypt there were dramatic entertainments by Miss Ethel Gunning and Mr. Will Rankin, and half-hour concerts arranged by Mr. G. Coffey May. In other parts of the premises were the cinematograph, houpla, and shooting gallery. Refreshments were served on the platform of the Hall. Owing to the indefatigable labours of the organisers and stall-holders, there was brightness and activity all the while. The opening ceremonies were performed, on Friday, by Mrs. J. W. Kempster, with Sir Otto Jaffe as Chairman, and on Saturday by Miss Lindsay, with Mr. James Davidson as Chairman. The openers were presented on each occasion with a handsome bouquet and a dainty Blue Bird brooch, the brooches being the gift of Miss Carlisle. Mrs. Kempster gave the Bazaar an excellent start in her opening speech, in which she said—"She did not know who first thought of calling that a 'Blue Bird' Bazaar, but the designation was a very proper one, for the moral of that charming allegory was that real happiness came to those who tried to make others happy; and they had an illustration of this in the unselfishness of the ladies who had made the beautiful work on the stalls, and then parted with it. The work disappeared, like the Blue Bird, and they never saw it again; but the happiness remained." Continuing, Mrs. Kempster said All Souls' was far too beautiful a church to be in debt, and she concluded with conveying to those present the best wishes of Lord and Lady Pirrie and Miss Carlisle. On Saturday, Rev. Richard Seaver, of St. John's, Malone, was on the platform, and made a most friendly speech. It is thought that the Bazaar will realize about £200, which, together with a cheque from Lord and Lady Pirrie for fifty guineas, will go a long way towards freeing the church from debt. Mrs. Will Rankin made an admirable Secretary, and she was well backed up by Mr. Adam Millin, the Church Secretary.

Crumlin.—Successful Harvest Thanksgiving services were held at Crumlin on Sunday, October 26. The preacher was Rev. A. Davison (Dromore). The evening congregation was a very good and encouraging one, and the church was beautifully decorated with the season's gifts.

Holywood.—The first meeting of the season of the Total Abstinence Society was held on Tuesday, November 11th. Instead of the annual soiree we began the season this year with a lantern lecture by the Rev. H. J. Rossington, "A Tour in the Tyrol." In spite of unfavourable weather there was a large audience, and there was a general agreement that those who braved the elements were highly rewarded. Fine descriptions, touches of humour, occasional historical references kept the interest of the audience for over an hour, while the views were especially good. At the close of the lecture a vote of thanks to Mr. Rossington and to Mr. George Hill, who officiated at the lantern, was cordially passed on the motion of Rev. G. L. Phelps, seconded by Dr. Greenfield.

Mountpottinger Unitarian Church.—A special Musical Service was held in this church on Sunday, the 16th November, under the direction of the Organist, Miss M. Morrow, L.I.A.M. Anthems were rendered by an augmented choir, and several solos were sung by friends who had come to help. The service was conducted by the Rev. E. H. Pickering, B.A., of All Saints', who gave a suitable address dealing with the power of music as an influence for good. On Friday evening, the 21st November, a social evening was inaugurated by the Choir for the purpose of presenting

Miss Mollie Davidson with a suitable acknowledgment of their esteem in view of her approaching marriage. The gifts were handed over on behalf of the Choir by Mr. John Allen, who, in a few brief remarks, testified to the interest Miss Davidson had always evidenced in the Church and its off-shoots.

Orphan Society.—Local treasurers of the Orphan Society will learn with deep regret of the death of our hon. treasurer, Mr. Thomas Henderson, which took place at his residence, in Bangor, on 17th November. Mr. Henderson had been treasurer for a number of years, and had taken a deep interest in the affairs of the Society. Shortly before his death he resigned the office, and on the 5th November, at a special meeting of governors, Mr. A. K. Stewart, 49 Donegall Place, Belfast, was elected to, and accepted, the position of hon. treasurer in succession to Mr. Henderson. Local treasurers will therefore in future send their subscriptions to Mr. Stewart at the address given.

Echoes.

In a letter containing a warm tribute to the late Miss Gaskell in the "Manchester Guardian," Bishop Welldon refers sympathetically to her political and religious beliefs. "She exemplified, as she appreciated," he says, "the power of a womanhood which does not court but avoids publicity. It was almost literally true of her that she did not let her left hand know the good that her right hand did. Yet she was a Liberal of the Liberals in her advocacy of the social reforms which are tending to make England a better and happier home than ever it has been for the poor and humble classes of the people—men, women, and children. You have referred in your obituary notice of her to her Unitarian creed. I never talked to her about it, and I do not doubt that she retained it to the last. But the most orthodox Christian will, I think, acknowledge that he may learn much from the teaching of Dr. Channing or Dr. Martineau, and of their school and of their spirit was Miss Gaskell. Her eyes would flash with indignation at anything which seemed to her in literature or in conduct demoralising to the popular mind. In her patience and sympathy, in her love of human good, in the high spirituality of her nature she was a simple follower of Jesus Christ. One who knew her well and watched at her bedside as her life was ebbing away wrote to me that she thought 'there could be no better Christian than Miss Gaskell.'"

* *

"Character is the end of life, and all that we live for is manhood and womanhood," writes Dr. Lyman Abbott. "Christ's purpose was to develop the highest, noblest, divinest quality in each individual, and therefore the highest and noblest quality in the aggregate of individuals. We are to live, not that we may have liberty, but that out of our liberty there may come a better growth, not that we may have education, if by education we mean schools and books, but that out of schools and books there may emerge a nobler manhood; not even that we may have religion, if by religion we mean creeds and rituals and churches and preachers; these are of use only as they make men more worthy to be called sons of God. Service is the universal duty; character is the sole standard of values."

* *

A working man, inspired, so he tells us, by the writings of Jules Verne, has just completed the invention of a machine which he anticipates will journey to and reach the moon (without a passenger). While this machine is careering to the moon, its progress (or, should we say, tentatively, its behaviour) will be watched by means of powerful telescopes. The inventor modestly says that he does not anticipate his machine will do anything to startle the world. He is calling it the "ether machine," because it is designed to utilise the etheric forces to overcome the forces of gravity. It can only be experimental, for no one really knows what ether is, but we may learn something when this

interplanetary locomotive is launched into space. I wonder how it will be welcomed by the man in the moon . . . and whether the idea will suggest itself to him to pay us a visit by its means.

SEED SEASON.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Agricultural Instructors have now been abroad in the country for years and that many honest Merchants have endeavoured to give the best Seed possible, it is still necessary to point out to the Farmers the absolute necessity of buying nothing but the best Seeds obtainable. The Stock at 40 VICTORIA SQUARE, BELFAST, has been selected with more than ordinary care, and we offer **CLOVERS, GRASSES, FLAX-SEED, etc.,** of the very choicest quality at Moderate Prices. Last year's report shows that our **M'ERVEL'S SPECIAL DUTCH FLAXSEED** gave heaviest yield on record, and in several markets produced extraordinarily high prices. This Seedhias been bought specially for ourselves in Holland, and the prce is moderate. It will, however, be necessary for Farmers to purchase early while first shipments are on sale. Our **PASTURE MIXTURE** for one or two years' cutting and afterwards grazing has given the best results in North, South, and West of Ireland. Customers using this Mixture have been, without exception, well satisfied.

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